

The Scuttlebutt Chronicles

- ❖ MESSAGE FROM THE VSO
- ❖ SHELTER IN PLACE- COPING IDEAS
- ❖ COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS- IDEAS FOR MOTHERS DAY
- ❖ VA NEWS- COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CARE GIVERS
- ❖ VA NEWS-VA TELEHEALTH (2 PAGES)
- ❖ VETERAN LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM
- ❖ BLUE WATER CLAIM
- ❖ CA DMV VETERAN / SPECIAL LICENSE PLATE
- ❖ JUST SO YOU KNOW / STATS / ASK THE VSO
- ❖ IMPORTANT DAYS TO REMEMBER-WE WILL NEVER FORGET



VSO Quarterly Newsletter

Volume No. 6, April, May, June 2020

Message from the VSO: Army Veteran, Celestina Traver M.A.



With the “*Stay in Place*” order given by the Governor of California – it has seemed to pull our community together. I see neighbors waiving to each other, and people are writing inspirational words and phrases on the side walk for neighbors to see when they walk by. Let’s remember to take time to reach out to our friends, family and to our veteran community just to say “*Hi*” and check on their health. This is also a great time to start a hobby or interest you have postponed because you were busy. Our office is ***closed to the public***, but rest assure that we are still working in the office supporting the needs of our veterans and our community. Stay healthy.



Troy Payne
U.S. Army
Veterans Services Rep
tpayne@co.shasta.ca.us



Amy Hancock
Office Assistant II
530-225-5616



Renee Cotter
U.S. Army
Veterans Services Rep
rcotter@co.shasta.ca.us



Tarah Adner
Office Assistant I
530-225-5616



Tyler Miller
U.S. Army
Veterans Services Rep
tmiller@co.shasta.ca.us



Rodney Blackwell
USMC
Work Study



Nora Smith
USAF
Veterans Services Rep
nsmith@co.Shasta.ca.us



Picture by: Mary Ann
Turner of Redding, CA

Shelter in Place- How to Cope

Look through old family scrapbooks, yearbooks and photo books. Basically, indulge in nostalgia. Work on scrapbooks to give as gifts at Easter!

Spring Clean up your house. Remember that huge cleaning session you've been thinking about for months? Garage, Shed, Barn! PERFECT time to create defensible space.

Learn a new language. Learning a few words every day can help a lot. Look for the best free online classes.

Call and speak to your long distance friend or family. **Remember** to check on Elderly neighbors & Veterans who live in isolated areas and or far away! Let them know you care and they are not alone.

Exercise. Even if you don't feel like exercising, doing a few jumping jacks and stretching exercises will keep you going for the rest of the day. Not interested-try walking your dog, yard work, landscape and beautification are great exercise.

Learn a new game/skill. It could be anything from pottery to a card or board game. What about cooking/baking? Once this is over- share the recipe with friends/family.

Arrange the placement of the furniture in your room differently for a change. Breaks up the *same old* room feeling while at home.

Enrich your general knowledge and surf the internet to know more about some interesting topics or facts. Take a free class online.

Share with friends/family members- hilariously ugly/or embarrassing photos you've captured. Think mullet, rat tail, bowl cut, a Great Aunts bouffant hair do/don't!

Community Connections

Ideas for Mothers / Fathers Day- While Shelter in Place



Help Mom Plant a Garden- utilize current vegetables in your own fridge



Write her a story or a poem



Create a “Moms” movie night- choose her favorite flick and ask why she loves it so much



Put together a Photo album/scrap book for her- explain why you chose those specific photos. Leave extra pages for her to add to it later.



Cut wild flowers and create a wonderful center piece with a hand made card.



Create a “Home Spa” for mom. Nail polish, Bubble Bath, Face mask, and sweets or bubbly for her enjoyment.



If mom is not near by- put together a care package of her favorite items- from CDs, books, treats, health care items, hobby items, etc.



Order her dinner and have it delivered- Dad will also Thank You



Even if you are unable to be with Mom this Mothers Day- you could video chat or call her to plan a trip once life has resumed to normal. Take advantage of travel deals that will appear.



Give Dad a fishing License- or just take him fishing



Have a BBQ for Dad- chicken, steak, kabobs, etc.



Order Dad some swag from amazon-order early to allow time for delivery



Fathers day bucket- BBQ rubs, fishing gear, hunting knife, etc.



Personalized photo Album



Organize Dads workbench, shop, garage, barn for him –Mom will also thank you



Car wash kit- tis the season



Dad Date- take him to his favorite place-like the race track when it opens-plan ahead



Family Horse Shoe Competition- make or buy a trophy- start a new tradition



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA publishes proposed regulations to improve the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

WASHINGTON –The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will publish a proposed rule in the Federal Register March 6 that would improve and standardize VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and ensure the pro-gram regulations reflect changes required by the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

A component of the Caregiver Support Program, the PCAFC was established in 2011 to provide additional benefits including a monthly stipend for qualifying family caregivers of eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

In the proposed rule, VA seeks to standardize eligibility by expanding the definition of serious injury to include any service-connected disability — regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness or disease — defining what it means to be in need of personal care services, and ensuring that the eligibility criteria capture the personal care service needs of Veterans and Service members with cognitive or neurological impairment or mental health conditions, among other things.

Additionally, VA is proposing changes to the stipend payment methodology, definitions for financial planning and legal services and procedures for revocation and discharge, to include advance notice requirements aimed at improving communication between VA and PCAFC participants.

"We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to caregivers who work tirelessly to provide critical support for our nation's Veterans," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This proposed regulation would improve the assistance we provide to help ensure our most vulnerable Veterans can stay in their homes with their loved ones for as long as possible."

VA's Caregiver Support Program is the first of its kind and addresses the complexity and expense of keeping loved ones out of institutions and at home with their families who provide personalized care. The program offers unparalleled support services including training, peer mentoring, respite care, a telephone support line and self-care courses for caregivers of all Veterans enrolled in VA health care who need personal care services.

The regulations are part of a broad effort to strengthen PCAFC in advance of a planned expansion under the MISSION Act which expanded eligibility for PCAFC to eligible Veterans from all eras, beginning with those who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. Two years after the first phase of program expansion, PCAFC will include eligible Veterans who were seriously injured in the line of duty between May 7, 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001. Prior to expanding, VA must fully implement an information technology (IT) system required by the MISSION Act.

In October 2019 VA launched a commercial off-the-shelf IT system and expects to complete deployment in late summer or early fall of 2020. The department also standardized operating procedures for the Caregiver Support Program, provided new training for staff and caregivers and is boosting operational capacity through hiring of additional staff. These changes are necessary as VA pre-pares to expand PCAFC.

Learn more about support services available for caregivers of Veterans or call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.

The proposed rule will be open for public comment in the Federal Register for 60 days.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA Telehealth Services

Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) is defined as the use of real-time interactive video conferencing, sometimes with supportive peripheral technologies, to assess, treat and provide care to a patient remotely. Typically CVT links the patient(s) at a clinic to the provider(s) at another location. CVT can also provide video connectivity between a provider and a patient at home. CVT encompasses more than 50 clinical applications in VA such as specialty and primary care.

Telehealth increases access to high quality health care services by using information and telecommunication technologies to provide health care services when the patient and practitioner are separated by geographical distance. VA is committed to increasing access to care for Veterans, and has placed special emphasis on those in rural and remote locations.

Home Telehealth (HT) is defined as a program into which Veterans are enrolled that applies care and case management principles to coordinate care using health informatics, disease management and technologies such as in-home and mobile monitoring, messaging and/or video technologies. The goal of Home Telehealth is to improve clinical outcomes and access to care while reducing complications, hospitalizations, and clinic or emergency room visits for Veterans in post-acute care settings, high-risk Veterans with chronic disease or Veterans at risk for placement in long-term care.

Telehealth is Transformational. Telehealth is one of VA's major transformational initiatives aimed at ensuring care is convenient, accessible and patient-centered.

☐ In fiscal year (FY) 2016, about 12% of Veterans received elements of their care via telehealth.

☐ Telehealth in VA provides mission-critical services that help Veterans to live independently in their own homes and local communities.

☐ VA providers and patients discuss and decide together which telehealth care services are available in their location and clinically appropriate for the patient to opt into.

Store and Forward Telehealth (SFT) is generally defined as the use of technologies to asynchronously acquire and store clinical information (e.g. data, image, sound and video) that is then forwarded to or retrieved by a provider at another location for clinical evaluation. VA's national Store-and-Forward Telehealth programs operationalize this definition to cover services that provide this care using a clinical consult pathway and a defined information technology platform to communicate the event/encounter between providers, as well as enabling documentation of the event/encounter and the associated clinical evaluation within the patient record.

Telehealth is Robust and Sustainable. Telehealth is an effective and convenient way for patients to receive, and clinicians to provide, VA care. VA has implemented national quality, implementation, and development resources to ensure local services from more than 900 VA locations.

Telehealth is Visionary. Telehealth in VA is the forerunner of a wider vision in which the relationship between patients and the health care system is changed with the full realization of the "connected patient". The high levels of patient satisfaction and positive clinical outcomes attest to this.

VA Telehealth by the Numbers Fiscal Year 2016

☐ The number of Veterans receiving care via VA's telehealth services grew approximately 4% in FY16, and is anticipated to grow by approximately 4% in FY17.

☐ VA provided care to more than 702,000 patients via the three telehealth modalities. This amounted to over 2.17 million telehealth episodes of care.

☐ Forty-five percent 45% of these Veterans lived in rural areas, and may otherwise have had limited access to VA healthcare.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Signature VA Telehealth Programs In developing VA Telehealth programs, VA has focused on Veteran patients as the main driver to prioritize areas of care. Signature VA Telehealth Programs that have been developed, or are currently under development include, but are not limited to:

- ☐ TeleAddiction Services
- ☐ TeleAmputation Care
- ☐ TeleAudiology
- ☐ TeleBipolar Disorder
- ☐ TeleCardiology
- ☐ TeleDental Care
- ☐ TeleDermatology
- ☐ TeleCardiology
- ☐ TeleChaplain
- ☐ TeleDentistry
- ☐ TeleDermatology
- ☐ TeleEpilepsy
- ☐ TeleGastroIntestinal/Hepatitis Care
- ☐ TeleGenomic Counseling
- ☐ TeleInfectious Disease
- ☐ TeleIntensive Care
- ☐ TeleKinesiology
- ☐ TeleMental Health
- ☐ TeleMOVE! Weight Management
- ☐ TeleNephrology
- ☐ TeleNeurology
- ☐ TeleNutrition
- ☐ TeleRetinal Imaging
- ☐ TeleOccupational Therapy
- ☐ TelePain Management
- ☐ TelePathology
- ☐ TelePodiatry
- ☐ TelePolytrauma Care
- ☐ TelePrimary Care
- ☐ TelePulmonology
- ☐ TeleRehabilitation
- ☐ TeleSchizophrenia
- ☐ TeleSpinal Cord Injury Care
- ☐ TeleSpirometry
- ☐ TeleSurgery (Pre - & Post- Care)
- ☐ TeleTransplant (Pre - & Post- Care)
- ☐ TeleWound Care
- ☐ Women's Telehealth

Veteran Enrollment in Telehealth-

Telehealth has been implemented in over 900 VA sites of care.

☐ Providers and patients agree on suitability for Telehealth.

☐ Veterans can elect to have traditional in-person care instead of Telehealth.

☐ Telehealth is available for over 50 specialty areas of care.

Telehealth by Modality Veterans accessed VA care through one (or more) of the following telehealth types in FY16:

☐ More than 307,000 Veterans used Clinical Video Telehealth

☐ More than 150,000 Veterans used Home Telehealth

☐ More than 304,000 Veterans used Store-and-Forward Telehealth

Training for VA Physicians and other Clinicians

VA provides its national telehealth training for VA staff virtually. In FY16:

☐ VA provided 282 training sessions, with a total of 45,700 training completions. More than 10,000 staff attended at least one training session. VA conducts annual competency testing.

VA Telehealth Outcomes

Improved patient outcomes resulting in reduced utilization of inpatient care in FY16:

☐ Veterans enrolled in Home Telehealth for non-institutional care needs and chronic care management had a 59% decrease in VA bed days of care and a 31% decrease in VA hospital admissions.

☐ Mental Health services provided to Veterans via Clinical Video Telehealth (TeleMental Health) reduced Acute Psychiatric VA bed days of care by 39% and a 32% decrease in VA hospital admissions.

High Veteran satisfaction scores in FY16:

☐ 92% for Clinical Video Telehealth

☐ 88% for Home Telehealth

☐ 94% for Store and Forward Telehealth Learn More

Online about VA Telehealth Services:
<http://www.telehealth.va.gov/>



2019 Blue Water Navy Timeline

Procopio v. Wilkie-U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit-

- Decided January 29, 2019
- Overturned *Haas v. Nicholson* (2006)
- Covers “12 nautical mile territorial sea of the Republic of Vietnam”
- Court did not specify where the 12 nautical miles began
- VA interpreted as 12 nm from shore
- Court did not address earlier effective dates

Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 (PL 116-23)

- Passed on June 25, 2019
- Took effect January 1st, 2020
- Covers 12 nm from RVN baseline
- Baseline as much as 80 nm from shore
- Has earlier effective date provision
- VA conducted outreach to Veterans about the new law but it’s unclear how many were left out

What will the effective date for Benefits be for Blue Water Navy Veteran claims?

Presumptive Agent Orange conditions granted for Blue Water Navy Veterans *maybe* retroactive to the date VA received your original claim. If you had a previously denied claim and you resubmit your claim, the effective date will be determined on a *case-by-case* basis.



Blue Water Navy Veterans

The BWN Act also expanded the presumptive period for Korean DMZ Veterans to September 1, 1967 until August 31, 1971 (back from April 15, 1968) and added benefits for children of Thailand Veterans born with spina bifida. **BUT** the earliest possible effective date for these claims is January 1, 2020

Obtaining Deck Logs

In August 2019, the National Archives and VA entered into an agreement that will digitize more than 20 million pages of Vietnam-era U.S. Navy Deck Logs

- ☐ Was expected to be completed by February 1, 2020
- ☐ Data contained in these digitized images will be used by VA to assist in determining Veteran's eligibility for benefits and to resolve claims filed with the VA
- ☐ During the digitization process, U.S. Navy Deck Logs will be in the custody of the VA and will be unavailable.
- ☐ Upon completion, the deck logs will be returned to College Park, MD where they will be uploaded to the NARA website

VA Office of General Counsel issued a precedential opinion regarding effective dates for Blue Water Navy claims. A few notable items:

- The BWN Act did not adopt or extend the Nehmercourt rulings authorizing payments to estates of certain benefits payable under the Nehmerstipulation.
- A veteran or survivor who was granted benefits under the Procopio rule and whose claim for the same condition was previously denied on or after September 25, 1985, may be entitled to a retroactive award if he or she submits a claim for such award in accordance with the BWN Act. (i.e. claims **GRANTED** between 1/29/2019 and 6/25/2019 that did not receive retro benefits are now eligible)
- Only finally-denied claims (i.e., previously denied, never appealed, became final, and not reopened in any way) need to resubmit their BWN claim.

Please contact our office so that we can walk you through **HOW** to look up ship/deck log information. If you need to order your records we would be happy to assist.

We will help you navigate this information and file/re-file a claim in a timely manner.
530-225-5616 option#2



Have YOU talked to your Veterans Representative about one of these. You earned it, you deserve it!

Veterans Organization License Plate



California VETERANS LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM

Whether you are a Veteran, or want to show your support and appreciation for our Veterans, purchasing a Veterans License Plate helps increase awareness and directly supports Veterans Programs. For more information, visit our website at www.calvet.ca.gov or call your local County Veterans Service Office at (844) 737-8838.

www.calvet.ca.gov



Proceeds from the California Veterans License Plate program go to support Veteran services in California.

Every month- YOU have the opportunity to reach out and ask questions to the Shasta County VSO via the KCNR phone number, web page and / or Facebook.

Celestina Traver will be live on the air – the last Wednesday of each month from 8am-9am.

<https://www.kcncr1460.com/>

530-605-4567



Just the Stats Ma'am

Shasta County VSO

2019 Total Claims= 1342

Claims per week=25.8

Lump Sum Totals=\$75,746

Disability Totals= \$3,726,549

All in a DAYS WORK

In July 2019, our office was visited by a veteran that had questions about Service Connected disability. During the conversation, the veteran inquired about one of his conditions. The veteran informed the Representative that he had filed several conditions when he exited the military, 1975, but has assumed that it was denied until he reopened the claim in 1999.

While doing research on this case the Representative discovered that the Veterans Administration had failed to adjudicate one of the conditions that the veteran had filed in 1975. The same condition was then refiled by the veteran in 1999 and granted in 2000 as a Service Connection of 30%.

Knowing that the VA had failed to properly adjudicate the original claim in 1975, the Veterans Representative filed a Clear and Unmistakable Error (CUE) on behalf of the veteran. The VA was then forced to look back on the original claim and discovered that the veteran was indeed entitled to a 10% rating for the condition based on the laws and regulations at that time.

This discovery made the combined evaluation for the veteran 20% instead of the 10% that he was being compensated for from 1975 until 1999. This also made the veteran entitled to retroactive pay for the period from 1975-1999.

These types of errors are not typical of the VA however, when they occur, veterans are not usually able to navigate all the laws and regulations surrounding veterans claims as they can be rather convoluted. This either causes frustration for the veteran and the veteran gives up or more often just assumes that the VA got it correct. For this reason, we recommend that the veterans go and see their local VSO to assist with information and claims. Our VSOs have Federal Accreditation Access therefore the ability to read through a veteran's claims file and since the VSO's have access to the Federal computers claim systems, they can see and make sure that the VA is making accurate decisions and applying the laws correctly to each veteran's claim.

MAY 30th

MEMORIAL DAY

WE HONOR OUR HEROES

Memorial Day –American citizens who have been devoted to the ways of peace, may direct their attention to the human losses resulting from the ravages of war. ~Harry S Truman



WE WILL NEVER FORGET



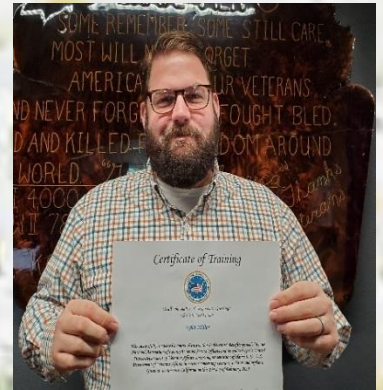
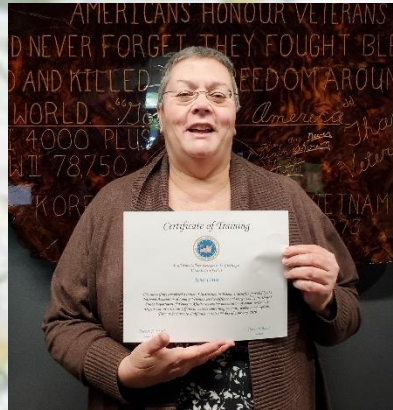
D-DAY

NORMANDY 1944

June 6th
76 Years

1ST QUARTER

NACVSO Accreditation



5th Annual Fraud Fair



American Legion Centennial Celebration



Shasta County Veteran Services Office

Office: 530-225-5616

Fax: 530-245-6464

Visit our webpage for printable checklists.

vso@co.shasta.ca.us



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF LOCAL VETERANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS BY ADVOCATING ON THEIR BEHALF TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL APPEALS COURT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THEM WITH BENEFITS AND SERVICES TO WHICH THEY MAY BE ENTITLED.

STAY SAFE